

### III. OTHER

#### New Jersey State Library Selected Highlights

**NJ State Library Grant.** In July 2010, Thomas Edison State College was awarded a \$5.1 million federal grant to support the New Jersey State Library's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program, a project designed to add computer workstations, upgrade Internet connectivity and provide job search assistance and workforce development programs at hundreds of libraries throughout New Jersey. The grant was provided by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program. The award, along with a \$1.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is being used to add computers at 124 libraries, upgrade connectivity at 79 libraries, and provide job search assistance, employment skills, workforce development programs and other online resources at 365 libraries across New Jersey. In addition, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gave an additional \$1.5 million to the New Jersey State Library to support E-rate technical assistance, which will help sustain the project's services.

**Renovation of Four Public Libraries.** The SWAT Team, a brainchild of the State Librarian's Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Future of Libraries, revamped the interior spaces of four public libraries on a shoestring budget. Four additional libraries have been selected for the next round.

**New Software Program.** The library purchased a software program that will allow local libraries to enter their statistics on a monthly basis in order to respond to legislative and media inquiries.

**New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center.** This year the focus of the Center was to reach out to military veterans. New "Outspoken Library" kiosks were installed at several Veteran Hospitals. The "Outspoken Library" is becoming a national model for easy and efficient downloading of digital titles for individuals who have difficulty holding or reading a regular book; these kiosks are in 33 public libraries with at least one unit in 17 NJ counties.

**New Jersey State Library Information Center.** The NJ State Library Center continued to present webinars of interest to state workers. There were also nine author talks held throughout the year.

**Websites Launched.** The NJWorks@YourLibrary website was implemented along with toolkits for libraries and the "It's Time to Land that Job" statewide campaign. The new State Library website was launched in April. Several partnerships were established this year to promote literacy and reading.

**Inaugural Spring Commencement:** Thomas Edison State College established a Spring Commencement to better accommodate the growing number of its graduates and their families who attend commencement. The inaugural Spring Commencement Ceremony took place on Saturday, April 16, 2011 at 2 p.m., in the historic College Avenue Gymnasium at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. Approximately 200 graduates from 21 states and their families attended the Spring Commencement Ceremony.

The College will now have two commencements each year, one in the spring, and the other in the fall.

**Partnership with Teach for America:** Thomas Edison State College recently formed a partnership with “Teach For America,” a national organization that recruits outstanding college graduates from a variety of backgrounds to teach for two years in traditionally underserved urban and rural public schools. The collaboration allows “Teach For America” alumni from across the U.S. to earn a graduate degree and certification in the Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program of the college.